DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 174 287 JC 790 466

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TITLE The Statewide Longitudinal Study: First Report. Research Study No. 79-11.
INSTITUTION Los Angeles City Coll., Calif.
PUB DATE Aug 79
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Aspiration; Community Colleges; Educational Background; Enrollment Trends; Ethnic Groups; Junior Colleges; *Junior College Students; Longitudinal Studies; Research Methodology; *Student Characteristics; Student Employment; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS California; Student Objectives

ABSTRACT

Los Angeles City College (LACC) is one of 15 California community colleges participating in a three-year longitudinal study designed to provide information on vocational education students, and student characteristics in general, as well as information about the efficacy of small sampling and methods most useful for long-term studies. Data in the first report were obtained for a sample of 558 LACC students from file records and telephone interviews with 61% of the sample. Findings revealed that: (1) of nearly 11,000 new applicants to LACC in Fall 1978, fewer than 7,000 were enrolled in classes at first census week; (2) about 40% of LACC entrants (30% statewide) had previous college experience, with about 15% (10% statewide) holding an associate degree or higher; (3) students indicated a variety of objectives in attending college; 38% had job-related objectives, 35% desired self-enrichment or had no objective, and about 28% planned to transfer to a four-year institution; (4) ethnic minority students accounted for 78% of LACC enrollment and only 34% statewide; and (5) about 60% of LACC students were working, and of these, 80% indicated their job was unskilled or semi-skilled. The image of the community college student as an 18-year-old just out of high school with plans to transfer after four semesters to a university appears to be correct for only a small percentage of students, at LACC and across the state. (DR)

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LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

"THE STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL STUDY: FIRST REPORT"

Research Study #79-11

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August 1979

"THE STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL STUDY: FIRST REPORT"

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

L.A.C.C. is participating as one of fifteen California Community Colleges in a major statewide effort to "provide the following information about each of the participating colleges and about the group as a whole:

(1) Detailed information about pertinent aspects of vocational education students and student bodies as a whole.

(2) Information about the effects of college programs on the lives of vocational students.

(3) Information about the efficacy of small sampling and the methods necessary to complete a useful and meaningful long-term study.

(4) Information about the feasibility of using a small-sample long-term study for supplying reliable information valid for the purposes of reporting to state and federal agencies on selected aspects of vocational programs.

(5) Information on the factors within certain vocational programs which inhibit Limited English Speaking and Non-English Speaking (LES-NES) students from enrolling in and/or completing their work.

(6) Information about needed curriculum and services for vocational education programs for disadvantaged, or handicapped students, displaced homemakers, or those in non-traditional programs."

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

The study was funded under Subpart 3 of PL 94-482, with Dr. M.S. Sheldon, Research Coordinator at Pierce College, acting as statewide project director, and Dr. Russell Hunter serving as full-time project administrator. The colleges listed below are participating in the study which is expected to continue for at least three years:

Antelope Valley College
Bakersfield College
Cerritos College
Contra Costa College
El Camino College
Foothill College
Golden West College
Imperial Valley College
Los Angeles City College
Los Angeles Pierce College
Sacramento City College
San Jose Evergreen College
Santa Ana College
Shasta College
Southwestern College

Colleges include urban, suburban, and rural colleges, northern and southern colleges, and colleges of varying enrollments. It is expected that combining data from all the colleges will produce a reliable picture of California Community College education.

Detailed planning of the study was done by a consortium consisting of (1) research coordinators from the fifteen colleges, (2) representatives of the State Chancellor's Office, and (3) representatives from community college research organizations. Project guidelines were prepared by this consortium in four statewide conferences. The Project Staff produced (1) a 150 page manual for data collection (2) 15 bi-weekly update newsletters, and (3) frequency distributions and cross tabulations of data collected from the colleges.

Data were collected from two sources: (1) student records, and (2) telephone interviews. The first source provided information on student demographics, student enrollment practices, and results of study (i.e. enrollments, completion ratios, GPA's). The second source provided

information on demographics not maintained in college files (marital status, employment status, etc.) as well as student perceptions of their needs, goals, reasons for dropping courses or leaving school, and the effects of college study upon their lives.

This first report describes data gathered during Fall 1978 at L.A.C.C., with statewide comparisons presented where available. By agreement with the statewide consortium, the sample of students was to be large enough to permit estimated percentages to be within 5% (95% confidence) at the local college, and the sample was to be randomly drawn from all Fall 1978 first time entrants who were enrolled in classes at first census week.

FINDINGS

From the 10778 new applications for admission to L.A.C.C. in Fall 1978, 1138 students were selected using random number table combinations of the last two digits of the students' social security numbers. 406 of these (35.7%) were not enrolled at census week, leaving 732 in the sample, which was further randomly reduced to the required number of 558.

The following tables summarize the data collected on these students in Fall 1978. Included in some of the tables are statistics about the entire L.A.C.C. population*, and statistics, where available, weighted (by project staff) to estimate statewide figures.

(*Some through sampling)

TABLE 1 - Day-Evening Enrollment

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
Day	321	58.7	58.1	51
Evening	173	31.6	31.7	35
Both	53	9.7	10.2	14
Total	547**	100.0	100.0	100

**Discrepancies in totals indicate missing data

TABLE 2 - Sex

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
Male	267	48.2	48.7	44
Female	287	51.8	51.3	56
Total	554	100.0	100.0	100

TABLE 3 - Age

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
15-19	178	31.9	16.7	41
20-24	134	24.0	33.1	20
25-29	113	20.3	20.4	12
30-34	59	10.6	11.8	8
35-39	31	5.6	6.4	5
40-44	14	2.5	3.8	4
45-49	7	1.3	2.6	3
50-54	9	1.6	1.9	2
55-59	8	1.4	1.4	2
60-64	2	0.4	0.8	1
65+	3	0.5	1.0	2
Total	558	100.0	100.0	100
Mean		25.8	27.6	25.8
Median		22.8	24.5	21.6

TABLE 4 - Was subject reachable for interview?

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
Yes	340	61.4	77
No Answer (3 tries)	115	20.8	
Phone Disconnected / Wrong Number	99	17.9	23
Total	554	100.1	100

The above tables were based on the sample of 558. The tables that follow include only the 340 who completed a telephone interview.

TABLE 5 - Was the subject cooperative in the interview?

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
Yes	331	97.4	98
No	9	2.6	2
Total	340	100.0	100

TABLE 6 - Marital Status

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
Never Married	226	71.3	71.3	65
Married	69	21.6	21.6	29
Separated	4	1.2	6.2	1
Divorced	16	5.0		4
Widowed	3	0.9	0.9	1
Total	328	100.0	100.0	100

TABLE 7 - Number of Dependents

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
None	250	76.2	77.3	77
1	36	11.0	11.7	8
2	16	4.9	7.1	7
3	15	4.6	2.7	4
4	1	0.3	0.7	2
5	10	3.0	0.4	2
Total	328	100.0	99.9	100

TABLE 8 - Hours per week working for pay

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	LACC Population %	Statewide %
Not Employed	108	33.1	27.7	32
1-10	15	4.6	5.7	3
11-20	29	8.9	14.8	13
21-30	27	8.3	11.1	11
31-40	120	36.8	37.0	35
41+	16	8.3	3.7	5
Total	315	100.0	100.0	99

Table 9 - Occupational Status (if employed)

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
Unskilled	60	27.9	20
Semi-skilled	106	49.3	40
Skilled	43	20.0	25
Prof-Supv.	2	0.9	8
Other	4	1.9	7
Total	215	100.0	100

TABLE 10 - Working Students' Hourly Wage

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
$1.00-2.99	28	16.9	20
3.00-4.99	88	53.0	47
5.00-6.99	25	15.1	15
7.00-8.99	17	10.2	10
9.00+	8	4.8	8
Total	166	100.0	100
Mean		$4.66	$4.27

TABLE 11 - Number of units enrolled in

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
1- 2	4	1.2	8
3- 5	72	21.6	24
6- 8	58	17.4	16
9-11	40	12.0	12
12-14	55	16.5	19
15-17	43	12.9	13
18-20	34	10.2	5
21+	77	8.1	2
Total	333	100.0	99
Mean		11.5	9.5
Median		10.9	9.0

TABLE 12 - Number of courses enrolled in

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
1	62	18.7	26
2	58	17.5	17
3	36	10.9	13
4	38	11.5	13
5	39	11.8	14
6	41	12.4	9
7	27	8.2	4
8	14	4.2	2
9+	16	4.8	1
Total	331	100.0	99
Mean		4.5	3.3

TABLE 13 - Reason for withdrawing (if class dropped)

	LACC Sample No.	%	Statewide %
Job Conflict	31	23	25
Assignments too heavy	22	17	13
Disliked class or instructor	19	15	20
Illness	15	11	9
Underprepared	14	11	9
Indef. motivation	14	11	12
Others	14	11	12
Total	129	99	100

TABLE 14 - Number of years out of school

	LACC Sample No.	%	Statewide %
0	139	42.8	46
1	58	17.8	12
2	29	8.9	7
3	9	2.8	5
4	11	3.4	3
5	11	3.4	3
6+	70	20.9	24
Total	327	100.0	100

TABLE 15 - Last School Attended

	LACC Sample No.	%	Statewide %
High School	159	50.6	63
Adult Night School	15	4.8	2
Community College	71	22.6	18
Four Year College	54	17.2	13
Other	15	4.8	4
Total	314	100.0	100

TABLE 16 - Projected Stay (in semesters) at LACC

No. of Semesters	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
1	41	12.8	7
2	49	15.3	11
3	9	2.8	4
4	89	27.7	29
5+	13	4.0	9
Occas. Attend.	120	37.4	40
Total	321	100.0	100

TABLE 17 - Highest Grade Completed

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
Below 12th	28	8.7	7
12th	164	51.1	61
Some College	86	26.8	21
AA Degree or Cert.	22	6.8	4
Bachelor Degree	17	5.3	5
Higher Degree	4	1.3	1
Total	321	100.0	99

TABLE 18 - College Objectives

	LACC Sample No.	LACC Sample %	Statewide %
Pre-Employment Train.	108	32.3	29
Prep. for Transfer	92	27.5	29
In-service Training	13	3.9	8
Retraining	5	1.5	3
Self Enrichment	67	20.1	23
Undecided	49	14.7	8
Total	334	100.0	100

TABLE 19 - Identified (by interview) as member of Special Group

	LACC Sample		Statewide
	No.	%	%
Non-Traditional Major	13	4.0	3
Handicapped	12	3.7	3
Financially Disadvantaged	65	20.1	15
Educationally Disadvantaged	58	18.0	14
Problem with English	104	32.2	15
Displaced Homemaker	3	0.9	3
Ethnic Minority	251	77.7	34

TABLE 20 - Ethnic Distribution

	LACC Sample		LACC Pop.	Statewide
	No.	%	%	%
Amer.Indian/ Alaska National	4	1.2	1.5	N/A
Asian/Pac. Island	59	18.3	20.0	
Black,not Hispanic	101	31.3	39.1	
Hispanic	70	21.7	17.9	
White, not Hispanic	72	22.3	20.0	
Other	17	5.2	1.5	
Total	323	100.0	100.0	

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This is the first report summarizing L.A.C.C. data obtained through participation in a longitudinal study of a sample of first time Fall 1978 students at fifteen of the state's community colleges. Data were obtained from student records and by telephone interviews with the student.

Following are some observations of the Fall 1978 findings:

(1) Of the nearly 11000 new applications for admission to LACC in Fall 1978, less than 7000 were enrolled in classes at first census week. About half of the 4000 not enrolled at census week did not enroll in classes at all.

(2) Attempts were made to telephone all 558 students selected in the sample. Credible interviews were completed with about 61%, 18% had incorrect phone listings or a disconnected phone, and 21% were unable to be contacted after three tries at different times of day.

(3) Comparisons of day-evening registrations and sex indicate the sample is representative of the LACC population. Age comparisons indicate the average sample age is about two years less than the LACC population, an expected result since the sample includes first-time students only.

(4) About 40% of LACC entrants (30% statewide) had previous college experience, with about 15% (10% statewide) holding an AA degree or higher.

(5) Over half the LACC entrants (also statewide) had a year or more elapse since their last school attendance.

(6) Similar to statewide patterns, students indicate a variety of objectives in attending college; about 38% job related, about 35% self enrichment or no clear objective, and about 28% transfer to a four year institution.

(7) LACC differs significantly from statewide in the following characteristics:

(a) 78% of LACC students are ethnic minority; 34% statewide.

(b) 30% of LACC students signed up for 6 or more classes; 15% statewide.

(c) 80% of LACC students who work (about 2/3 of them) indicated their job was unskilled or semi-skilled; 60% statewide.

(8) The image of the community college student being an 18 year old just out of high school planning to stay four semesters and then transfer to a four year university is correct only for a small percentage of students, both at LACC and across the state.

The next report on this project will examine persistence and academic performance through the first year and will examine student majors.

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